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ABSTRACT

This conference, whose theme was "The Testing Issue," addressed problems encountered with standardized testing in Alabama's historically black colleges and universities, and predominantly black high schools. It focused on immediate intervention strategies designed to provide access to high school diplomas, college, graduate and professional schools, and professional employment. Charlynn Robinson's opening remarks stressed the survival of black teachers and the need to improve teacher-made tests and teaching strategies. The keynote address by Thelma L. Spencer focused on methods used to teach students to think in systematic and accurate patterns. Students should be taught to subvocalize (move lips) to help themselves to hear, internalize, and increase their thinking ability. Teachers should be teaching reading in their subject fields. Teacher-made tests should give student familiarity with standardized test format. Improving thinking skills will improve test-taking skills. Other issues addressed at the conference included: (1) methods for developing classroom tests; (2) teacher accountability; (3) long-range instructional development programs emphasizing basic skills; (4) current models for test score improvement; and (5) test-taking tips and strategies for students. Appendices include Spencer's keynote address, "Improvement of Instruction and Learning," and six reports from participating institutions on current or planned models for improving test scores. (BS)

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"THE TESTING ISSUE"

PROCEEDINGS OF A CONFERENCE CO-SPONSORED BY

THE ALABAMA CENTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
SCHOOL/COLLEGE CONNECTION PROGRAM
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
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AND

THE CENTER FOR IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING
ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY
(Funded by a Title III Grant through The U.S. Office of Education)

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HELD AT

ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY
MONTGOMERY, AL

APRIL 12-13, 1984

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FOREWORD

This conference, which addressed problems encountered with standardized testing in Alabama's historically Black colleges and universities as well as public schools in Alabama's "Black Belt," was an endeavor to make a worthwhile contribution in a highly controversial arena.

The conference theme, "The Testing Issue," might suggest to some participants that this was an attempt to address that controversy. On the contrary, the thrust of the conference was to demand of all education professionals immediate intervention strategies designed to assure the current generation of minority students access to high school diplomas, college, graduate and professional schools, and professional employment.

While there is much question regarding the propriety of the current use of the results of standardized tests, the ultimate power of these tests to deny such access, coupled with our students' performance on such instruments demands a recognition of the need for immediate development and implementation of a plan of academic excellence.

The Alabama Center for Higher Education and Alabama State University's Center for the Improvement of Instruction and Learning were pleased to host the participating institutions and school systems and applaud their commitments to secure the action needed to make standardized testing a "former" barrier for our students.

Beatrice B. Morse, Director
Center for Improvement of
Instruction and Learning

Reynard McMillian, Project Director
Alabama Center for Higher
Education

Acknowledgements

This conference is greatly indebted to the Alabama Center for Higher Education, the Center for Improvement of Instruction and Learning and the following individuals for their cooperation and participation.

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Conference Summary

The conference on "The Testing Issue" convened at Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama, April 12-13, 1984. The number of participants and the diversity of their backgrounds and interests attested to the interest generated by the conference theme. Apparently a variety of professionals desired enhancement in the area of testing.

There were forty-five persons representing seven different colleges and twenty-two persons who represented eight different school systems. It is noteworthy that most institutions or school systems were represented by more than one person. The Alabama Center for Higher Education in Birmingham was instrumental in assuring diverse participation by providing travel and hospitality for participants as well as partial consultant services. The Alabama Center for Higher Education is to be commended for its contributions.

In introductory remarks, Dr. Charlynn Robinson, Director of Higher Education Outreach at the Southern Regional Office of Educational Testing Service, set the tone of the conference by providing a cogent treatise of the rationale for such a conference.

"The key word," according to Dr. Robinson, "is survival—survival of the Black teachers' presence in public schools, survival of teacher education programs in historically Black colleges, and survival in terms of our own jobs as college professors. That is the rationale."

The speaker cautioned that survival will be effected only through the involvement of administration, faculty and students. In seeking solutions, any approaches to a solution must concern themselves with equity, access and quality.

Dr. Robinson continually stressed the interrelationship between teaching and testing. She reminded the audience that most college professors earned research degrees and as such did not receive extensive training in testing. If we are to survive the dilemma created by standardized tests, we must struggle to improve the test we write as well as the strategies we use in teaching.

The keynote address was presented by Dr. Thelma L. Spencer, Executive Associate for School and College Relations for Educational Testing Service. The enthusiasm with which the speech was received merited its inclusion, unedited, in these Proceedings. It is attached as Appendix I.

During the afternoon of Thursday, April 12, 1984, from 1:30-4:00 p.m., concurrent sessions were held. Dr. Thelma Spencer addressed Learning and Critical Thinking Skills.

She focused on the manner in which we teach students to think in systematic and accurate patterns. In order to think in this dimension, students must hear themselves thinking (talking) out loud. Thus, students should be taught to subvocalize (move lips) to help themselves to hear, internalize and increase their thinking ability. Dr. Spencer stressed that teachers should be teachers of reading in their fields, i.e., make the assumption that students can read, but that they have difficulty comprehending the pertinent subject matter.

This is not to be confused with the teaching of developmental reading, as only a reading teacher can teach developmental reading.

Exercises in sequencing and ordering concepts were used as motivating aids for participants.

Dr. Charlynn Robinson focused on "Classroom Testing" in her afternoon session. In addition to acquainting participants with the steps in planning a test, including, but not limited to development of a two-way gridded table of specification, Dr. Robinson offered suggestions for preparing the various item types and gave technical considerations for assembling a test. Finally, she stressed the necessity of including items from every level of Bloom's taxonomy and provided examples for each level.

From 4:00 - 5:30 p.m., the consultants addressed the entire faculty of Alabama State University on Accountability, Teaching Effectiveness and their Relationship to the Testing Issue. Both Drs. Spencer and Robinson pointed to the increased use of students' outcomes as measures of teaching effectiveness by decision makers. The implications in terms of accountability were pretty obvious to the audience.

On the morning of April 13, 1984, from 8:00 - 12:00, Dr. Spencer provided suggestions for "Instructional Development to conference participants.

Dr. Spencer abhors short-range test-taking skills programs. Rather she advocates long-range instructional development programs with emphases on curriculum development and in-service programs. She believes that a concentration on basic skills in grades K-University

will provide the basis that will ensure optimal testing skills. Her rationale is that students cannot profit from strategies if they can neither read nor demonstrate adequate knowledge base. Teaching minimal level skills is not parallel to the teaching of the basics. "Education is a way of helping people to do for themselves, as everybody can be taught."

Dr. Spencer talked extensively on the reasons that Blacks score lower than their White counterparts. Implicit in this was the fact that Blacks are inadequate in the kinds of knowledge that are irrelevant to their world. Secondly, teacher-made tests do not prepare students to practice-out question types on standardized tests, i.e., classification, inference and analogy items.

Dr. Spencer states that a lack of commitment of money is the problem. As such, we should spend, whatever the allotment realized, on long-range activities that will develop curriculum and student performance.

In a concurrent session, some University level participants shared models which are presently being planned and used in their various institutions for the improvement of test scores. Summaries of these models are included as Appendix II.

The session which was planned on "Writing your own Items" was cancelled due to Dr. Robinson's unexpected departure because of urgent business in her office.

As a consequence, Dr. Robinson agreed to review any items that participants would send to her and return them with recommendations

for improvement. It was recommended by the group that all such items would be sent to Alabama Center for Higher Education (ACHE) who would be asked to serve as a depositary for an item bank. ACHE would first send the items to Dr. Robinson and receive the corrected items. Such items could then be requested from the bank by any ACHE institution to be used in developing its own simulated examinations. It was specifically agreed that item writers would identify the certification field, the area of the field from which the competency is taken, the specific objective addressed by the item, and the level from Bloom's Taxonomy at which the item is written. It was also suggested that one could dichotomize the taxonomy into factual (low level) or applied (higher level), if the actual level was not specifically known.

The group strongly felt the "sharing" session to be quite valuable and suggested that ACHE might serve as the liason to continue such sessions.

From 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. on Friday, Dr. Spencer "rapped" with students at Alabama State University on test-taking tips and strategies. She brought some very insightful observations to prospective test-takers which could come only from a person of her professional status. In addition to the usual useful hints on pacing, guessing strategies, error avoidance and reasoning, Dr. Spencer provided detailed information on the format of reading passages of Educational Testing Service (ETS) tests (e.g. GRE, SAT, GMAT, etc.), and provided test specifications for the GRE.

Conference Evaluation

Please complete the instrument by placing a check in the box that best describes your reaction to each statement.

I. Structure:

A. Did you find that the format of the conference met your needs?
Yes 100% No ____ Somewhat ____

B. What changes would you suggest?
1. Tape record or videotape sessions for future reference.
2. Specify names of buildings on program.

II. Facilities:

A. Were the facility arrangements comfortable and conducive to a learning experience?
Yes 96% No ____ Somewhat 4%

B. What changes would you suggest?
1. Arrange meeting area in semicircles or circle to facilitate dialogue and discussion.
2. Faulty microphone, noisy doors and overheated rooms.

III. Content:

A. Did you find the presentations helpful and relevant to your needs?
Yes 100% No ____ Somewhat ____

B. Did you feel that the conference purposes were achieved?
Yes 96% No ____ Somewhat 4%

C. What suggestions would your offer to improve the presentations?
1. Make it available to more of the faculty members.

D. Would you be willing to participate in additional conferences of this type?
Yes 100% No ____

IV. Leadership Development

A. How would you rate the resource persons of this conference?
Very Good 100% Fairly Good _____ Mediocre _____
(Special mention of Dr. Spencer)

B. Would you attend future workshops conducted by the consultant?
Yes 100% No ____

V. Composite Rating: Overall, the conference was:

Very helpful 100%

Somewhat helpful ____

Somewhat less than helpful ____

Not helpful at all _____

Evaluation (Cont.)

Comments: (unedited)

1. Specify the names of the building, Thelma Glass Auditorium is not in Thelma Glass Hall.
2. Sharing session among the institutions would be very helpful.
3. Periodic sharing sessions would be most helpful.
4. Materials and information can be applied in practical and productive ways.
5. Very good conference!
6. I am happy that we were told that we have problems far greater than testing, and that much of the problem is with the teachers.
7. Excellent!
8. We need more conferences of this type.
9. Are there efforts to develop linkages among professors in ACHE schools?

Conference Participants

	Name	Institutions
1.	Anthony, Nell	Alabama A & M, School of Education
2.	Bedgood, Joseph	Calhoun High School
3.	Bracy, Acquanetta	Alabama State University
4.	Bradford, Linda	Alabama State University
5.	Bray, Charlena	Alabama Center for Higher Education
6.	Brooks, Anne M.	Alabama State University
7.	Brown, Ollie M.	Bullock County Board of Education
8.	Cal, Jimmie	Alabama A & M
9.	Callahan, Ina M.	Tuskegee Institute
10.	Carter, Gene K.	Alabama State University
11.	Crawford, Alfretta	Paramount High School
12.	Cyrus, Ethel F.	Tuskegee Institute
13.	Dulan, Jeanette	Oakwood College, Education Dept.
14.	Early, Ida M.	Calhoun High School
15.	Edmonds, William S.	Alabama State University
16.	Forbes, Rebecca R.	Alabama State University, CIIL
17.	Freeman, Alma	Alabama State University
18.	French, Essie	Stillman College
19.	Grant, Emma S.	Alabama Center for Higher Education
20.	Green, Andrew	Greene County Board of Education
21.	Harris, Willa B.	Alabama State University
22.	Hicks, James H.	Alabama A & M
23.	Hodge, Evelyn	Alabama State University
24.	Howard, Leon	Alabama State University
25.	Hudson, Rochelle	Alabama Center for Higher Education
26.	Ivery, Thelma	Alabama State University
27.	Jackson, Alice Jean	Alabama State University
28.	Jackson, Daisy B.	Lowndes County School System
29.	Jaden, Lela	Alabama A & M
30.	Johnson, Bennie	Bullock County Board of Education
31.	Jones, Edythe	Talladega College
32.	Jones, John	Alabama State University
33.	Kennedy, Silas	ACHE/HRRDP
34.	Lancaster, A.	Alabama State University
35.	Larkin, Barbara	Bullock County Board of Education
36.	Lawson, Nora	Alabama State University
37.	Lester, Verda K.	Tuskegee Institute
38.	Marbury, Carl H.	Stillman College

Conference Participants
(Continued)

	Name	Institution
39.	McDuffie, Hinfred	Alabama State University, Title III
40.	McMillian, Reynard	ACHE/HRRDP
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42.	Morse, Beatrice B.	Alabama State University, CIIL
43.	Orear, Laverne	Lowndes County Board of Education
44.	Payne, Gladys	Alabama State University
45.	Peasant, Barbara N.	Alabama State University
46.	Purter, Gertrude	Eutaw High School
47.	Rauls, Albert L.	Alabama A & M
48.	Reese, Renee'	Alabama Center for Higher Education
49.	Reynolds, Deborah	Alabama A & M
50.	Robertson, Charles A.	Alabama Center for Higher Education
51.	Romain, Jean M.	Alabama State University
52.	Romanowski, Michael	Alabama State University
53.	Sanders, Doris	Alabama State University
54.	Scrushy, Carole C.	Lowndes County Board of Education
55.	Small, Maxine S.	Macon School System
56.	Smith, Mary A.	Miles College
57.	Thomas, Essie B.	Bullock County Board of Education
58.	Vaughn, Doris C.	Alabama State University
59.	Walker, Patricia	Alabama Center for Higher Education
60.	Whitt, Mary	Alabama State University
61.	Williams, Barry	Tuskegee Institute
62.	Williams, Lewis	Alabama State University
63.	Williams, Maudie	Alabama State University
64.	Williams, Patrice	Alabama State University
65.	Witcher, Johnnye M.	Alabama State University
66.	Witherspoon, Everette L.	Tuskegee Institute

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APPENDIX I

Improvement of Instruction and Learning

Let me begin this morning by giving you a little background about myself that you will need in order to put my remarks in some sort of context. I did not send Dr. Morse the 12-page curriculum vitae because there was no need for it. I have been at Educational Testing Service (ETS) for nearly 15 years and, I suppose, I have developed a reputation in the testing business that precedes me as has already been indicated. But you should know, also, that there are some things I did before I went into the testing business. I was a social worker; I have been a probation officer in Los Angeles County; I have also been a school teacher. I spent twelve years teaching first, second, and third grades in Cleveland, Ohio. And, as many of you know, when you can teach first, second, and third grade, you can get down to the nitty gritty of anything. Your message must be reduced to its basic terms. I guess that is the reason my message gets across when some other messages don't, because I cut through the thicket. I don't fool around, and I don't dress it up in jargon. One of the things said about me is that "when Thelma Spencer has spoken, you know what she wanted to say."

Now I'm not going to be complimentary, I'm not going to be unduly harsh, and I'm certainly not going to be discouraging in my remarks this morning, but I want you to know that everything I say comes from my heart. It is based on a sincere and genuine, deep-seated and pervasive commitment to improving education in this country, and to improving education most particularly for Black students. I do not have to teach on Black campuses to have this kind of commitment. I don't have to take on the aura of being a guru and the like. But make no mistake about it--one does have to know a great deal about education in order to work on improving it. I believe I have a background that gives me a perspective that is wide enough that it can encompass your concerns as well as some concerns that perhaps you have not been able to voice, that you have not been able to verbalize, but that do need to be articulated, that do need to be targeted, and thus become the focus of your concern.

Charlynn [Robinson] has mentioned the kinds of interrelations that are necessary to bring about the kind of improvement that we are seeking. But there is another aspect that I want you to consider, particularly those of you who come from public schools and who are on public higher education campuses. I want you to keep in the front of your mind the thought that the problems we are facing in education today are not new. Remember, too, that the commitment of money we need to bring about improvement is not as deep as it used to be. I, for one, am firmly convinced that what we are engaged in is not just a struggle for the survival of Black institutions, but a fight for the survival of public education in this country.

I believe, also, that there is need to deal not only with the survival issue, but to take into consideration the fact that as we--Blacks, that is--move into positions in education where we are the ones who are making the decisions, there is less and less money to make decisions about. What we must do is to make the most of the resources we have at our command and, in so doing, improve education in this country.

One thing I want you to be very aware of and that I want to be as clear and precise about as possible is that tests are being used more and more to provide data for some of the decisions we are called on to make in our positions of influence. Some educators have been misled into believing that instituting a test-taking skills program is the answer to their common problem. It is true that you can teach someone how to take a test. ETS, after years of effort on my part, has come around to my position on the efficacy of teaching test-taking. It can be done. But, as with everything else in the curriculum of the school, there is no need to teach someone how to take a test if he/she is unable to read that test to begin with. It is futile to spend time on test-taking skills and test sophistication programs if the students' knowledge background is so fragmented that they have no business being there in the first place.

I want to disabuse you right away of the notion that I am ETS' test-taking skills expert, sent out to help make the taking of standardized tests more palatable. You need to know that I do not believe in test-taking skills programs as substitutes for long-range efforts to improve instruction. I believe that the resources we have, the resources that are so very limited, should be spent on in-service development, on curriculum improvement, and on the kinds of things that have long-range payoff. You can, you know, actually take some student who has a good educational background, and who can read and calculate, and in about three hours teach him/her everything about test-taking they will ever need to know. But if you are going to put finite resources into test-taking skills programs then, as far as I am concerned, you are putting the cart before the horse, and you are certainly wasting your time.

With that background about my position on test-taking skills programs, I want to tell you my position on something else that I am sure will come as a surprise to many of you who will say, "Okay, that lady works for ETS and she believes in all of that statistical jargon." I don't. I do not believe in the normal curve. I do not believe that when you look at a test that you can determine that someone's ability to learn can be translated into a number. I happen to believe, and I hope that all of you here will support me in this contention, that everyone can be taught because none of you in this room was born knowing how to read, how to add, subtract, multiply, or divide. Someone had to teach you how to do those things. So, if you keep that in mind and let that be your guiding principle, there is not anything at all that you cannot do for your students if you are truly committed to them, and if you believe that education is a way of helping people learn to do for themselves. I guess I have shared enough of my background and my beliefs so that you know where I am coming from, and you can put my remarks in a total context by the time we are ready to leave this room to have some lunch.

Let me interject at this point for those of you who might be feeling a bit uncomfortable about now. At any point along the way, if you hear anything you don't like, if I say anything that you don't agree with, if you want to talk about it, we can meet outside later.

I want now to turn to the matter of "raising testing consciousness." I think that the article mentioned a few minutes ago by Ms. Bray was in USA Today. I read it on the way home from Greensboro the other night, and while it puts the issue in some contextual framework, it is only half the story. I had to tell this to the group there in Greensboro attending the annual meeting of the Committee to Improve Teacher Education (CITE) that was founded by Libby Koontz and me back in 1977. CITE is comprised of all the predominantly Black four-year institutions in North Carolina who share common problems and, sad to say, the same kind of problems we were talking about when CITE was founded.

The other half of the USA Today story is that it focuses on only one test and its outcomes. People talk about SAT, SAT, SAT. Well, it's not just the SAT, it is also the ACT that knocks your brains out. I don't know why we keep jumping on one test when there is another one that is used so prevalently in other parts of the country. You should know that while we give a few more than a million SATs each year, there are also about 900,000 ACTs given in the Midwest and the South. Then there is that other aspect and those of you who are in secondary education will agree with me on this--what about those students who never take an SAT or ACT? Are we slighting them? Are we short-changing them in terms of what we are trying to do about improving public school education? I think we have focused on the wrong end of the whole problem and that instead of worrying about those who are about to get into and out of four-year institutions, we ought to be worrying about what is happening those first twelve years, because if they do not get through that, they don't ever get to the four-year institutions. Those of you here who are from secondary schools are nodding your heads, saying, "At last someone is addressing our concerns."

We cannot deal with what is happening in four-year institutions if we do not look at what is happening in the secondary schools. And the only time we do that is when we say "they" (meaning secondary teachers) didn't teach them how to do algebra, how to do this, that and the other. Secondary teachers will be able to do it when there is the same kind of commitment to bringing about change as there is now with the focus on the quality of students seeking higher education.

I have real problems with the fact that we have begun to look again at the esoteric issues in this whole matter instead of focusing on what is happening in the teaching of basic skills. We have reduced the argument about teaching basic skills to teaching minimal skills, even though there is a vast difference between basic and minimal. I trust that some of you are aware of the fact that you talk about teaching basic skills, yet you end up teaching only what is necessary to get someone through a ninth or tenth grade proficiency level test, and all they carry out of your institution is minimum skills and an attendance certificate.

Now I want to talk a bit about a publication that I found stuck in my door when I returned from dinner last night. It is the Connection (School/College Connection). I am sure it is brand new because it is

designated as volume 1, number 1. It talks about teachers teaching improvement. This is an A.C.H.E. publication, and I am going to address several of the points included because they are a part of the prepared remarks I planned to make anyhow. I thought I might as well localize it for you as to go into what I had put down on paper. There is the question about what effect will the ACT requirements have on Blacks planning teaching careers? We might as well cut through the thicket and ask a more relevant question, to wit: what effect will standardized tests have on all of this? It will have a great deal of effect. To begin with, we are not talking only about those people who get into a four-year institution. We are also concerned about those who get out; those people who go into graduate or professional schools or programs; those who end up taking GRE advanced tests; those who come out of those advanced education programs to become administrators in public schools and secondary and post-secondary institutions.

One component of the A.C.H.E. program plans to use interviews, questionnaires and self-concept skills to study the effects of the ACT on enrollment and certification trends, self-concept development and student attitudes. I think that is a laudable goal, but I do hope that we will look at more than just what that one test does to someone's self-concept, because by the time they get ready to take the ACT, their attitudes toward learning have been fairly well-determined, and those who are going to make it will in spite of the ACT, not because of the ACT.

The ACT merely confirms for some that they can do it. It confirms for others that it does not really begin to tap their abilities, so they can go on and do pretty much what they planned to do in the first place. There are, as you know, some graduate institutions that will admit students on an "own risk" basis, meaning that it doesn't make any difference what the test score is or that you do not meet the requirements for admission to the institution's program. You are admitted on your own desire and commitment to succeed. And this same idea prevails in the so-called open admission institutions. They are not really open admission. What they do is to give students a chance to come in and show what they can do despite the ACT or SAT score. Some of those institutions that are not open admission kick them out as soon as it is clear that the high score they brought in didn't mean very much.

How does the need for test-taking skills affect the score of rural high school students? I can tell you it affects them negatively. I see no need to study this, but I suppose it is for the purpose of getting data on which to base program development that will help bring about the changes that we know are necessary. One of the problems that public school people in particular and educators in general have ignored is what is happening in rural schools; what is happening to those children and youth who are members of migrant families? All of these are very serious educational problems that we have not begun to look at in the depth they deserve. These are the students, by the way, who never get to the point of taking a standardized test for admission to college.

That is the kind of thing I am saying that secondary school people have to get a grip on so they can begin to help that segment of our school population that never gets the attention or the funding it needs. They are the ones who go into two-year institutions after graduating from high school or into the labor market looking for a job. Most of them nowadays don't do either due to the trickle-down theory of our much vaunted Republican administration. Not much is trickling down so they are standing on the corners.

We have another yet similar problem with respect to college graduates. Standing on the corners with the high school graduates are those with four-year degrees who, because of advancements in technology, are ill-prepared or unprepared to go out into the world of work. So we must think in terms of what are we preparing our young people for.

The testing consciousness referred to in Connection has focused attention on education, but I think it has focused attention on the wrong problems. How can minorities perform better on standardized tests? And they ask this question, also: Why do Blacks and some other minorities score low on the ACT? Is it a lack of test-taking skills, or is it a lack of both knowledge and test-taking skills? Well, again, I think we need to be looking at another problem that remains fairly well ignored. I have spent, as I told you, some years teaching first, second, and third grade. The only educationally disadvantaged children I ever taught were White children on the near west side in Cleveland, Ohio. The main reason they were educationally disadvantaged was that they were poor. Now, if we start thinking in terms of the kinds of students who score low on any kind of standardized test, we are not talking only about minority students, we are talking about poor children. Poor children whose families cannot afford a daily newspaper. Poor children whose families do not buy weekly news magazines. Poor children whose families cannot take them to museums. Poor children whose families cannot buy them books. These are the children we are talking about. The tragedy of it is that the majority of poor children in this country are minority children, and they are the ones who are in the public school systems of this country.

These children and the serious educational problems they pose and the declining financial base for their schools are the primary reasons we have Black superintendents heading many of the major school systems in the United States. The problems--financial, educational, and sociological--confronting these men and women, and the school systems they manage, are almost insoluble. So when a social institution gets to the point of being moribund, the power structure doesn't mind giving us the mayoral seats, they don't mind giving us the superintendencies, they don't mind giving us the presidencies of two-year institutions. Whenever the problems get to the point where they cannot be solved or appear to be insoluble, and the money gets cut off, and the tax base declines, then they can find one of us.

But back to testing consciousness--is it a lack of knowledge on the part of the students? I don't believe it is. It is a lack of certain

kinds of knowledge--that is, children have knowledge, they have survival skills, otherwise they would not be able to show up at the school building to begin with. But if we talk about the things they get tested on, those kinds of things are not relevant to the kind of world they live in. This leads me to point out that we have endowed standardized tests with considerably more feasibility than they actually possess. Standardized tests are not the answer to all problems. Standardized tests do not contain the wisdom of the world. When we begin thinking that someone cannot do something because a standardized test says he can't, and then we eyeball the person and see another total aspect of what that person's capabilities are, what that person's survival skills permit him to do, yet we still believe that test and what it tells us about this person, then I think we need to go back and examine what our education brought us to in the first place. You can eyeball and find out if someone can or cannot do something. You can, as Arthur Whimbey said in his book, Intelligence Can Be Taught, know if someone can read. "All you have to do is sit there and listen to him read." Why should it be necessary to give him a test? Why should you have to test to know if they can add and subtract when, if you give them some money, they can show you? Have you ever seen kids on a corner trying to straighten out who owes whom? They don't have to get out a calculator. They don't have to get a piece of paper to write on. They can figure it just like that in their heads. But us, we have decided that a test is the best way we can find out if someone can do something.

Is it a lack of test-taking skills? I believe it is. But I also believe that part of the problem lies in the fact that many of the teacher-made tests that kids are exposed to do not give them the kind of familiarity with standardized test format that they need. I have looked at, over the last few years, about 5,000 teacher-made tests, and I can almost count on one hand the ones that are worth giving again. These tests do not begin to ask the kinds and levels of questions that students meet when they open a standardized test. Now don't get me wrong. I am not saying that standardized tests are the best thing that anyone is ever going to be exposed to. It is just that the manner in which the questions are asked is something that is alien to most students. Students do not, for example, get in teacher-made tests the classification kinds of items where you have something with Roman numerals on it and you've got to figure out what fits and what doesn't. Students do not get the kinds of questions that ask which of these would be the least effective among five choices. All of the choices given have validity, but only one is the answer because it would be the last choice you would make. How many of you spend time teaching your students how to do these things? How many of you spend time helping your students with a 450-475 word reading comprehension passage with 8 to 10 to 13 questions, one of which will ask about the main idea, two or three about supporting detail, and always an intended inference question? There will be a question that asks if the writer of the passage has supported his/her argument, and there will perhaps be a question that asks for the attitude that person has displayed toward the topic. How many of you do that routinely as a means of helping your students acquire and use this test-taking skill?

You do not have to sit down and write out a new test each time you need to find out whether somebody can do something or knows something. Get some reading material on the topic under discussion, abstract it for your students, ask the kinds of questions I've just described for you and you will know if they can pull out of it what they have learned, what is important, what you want them to know. Many of you do not. What happens to them? They open a GRE and what do you find? Reading comprehension. They open an SAT and what do they find? Reading comprehension.

I am appalled when I hear someone say, "We've got to do something about getting rid of the PPST." PPST is the Pre-Professional Skills Test, an examination developed by ETS to be used for admission to teacher education programs. The test asks questions in reading and writing, namely usage and correction, and some math items that are no more than high school mathematics. To point up more precisely what I am talking about, you need to know that I heard a dean of education say not long ago that he was going to make it his business to attend a meeting of the state legislature education committee to ask that they get rid of the requirement for the PPST because Black students do not do well on the test, and it is unfair to ask them to take it.

Let me describe for you what he says is unfair. I have just told you what a GRE reading comprehension is like. What the dean is talking about is a test of reading comprehension passages of 100 words and 200 words in length. The 100-word passage--the short passage--has one question on the main idea and one on supporting detail. The 200-word passage--the long passage--has a main idea question, a couple on supporting detail and one inference question. I submit to you that any student unable to deal with this level of reading does not belong in a teacher education program.

When this dean ran his idea by me, I said, "You know, I would be embarrassed if I were you to propose this kind of thing because if we can ask students taking the SAT to deal with the 375- to 475-word reading passages, and teacher educators are saying that prospective teachers should not be asked to read a 100- or 200-word passage, then maybe we need to get out of the business entirely. Maybe we are not fit to be teacher educators if we are saying it will be virtually impossible for us to teach these young people how to read so they can go out and teach reading." I don't know whether I got it across to him or not, but I do know that he knows how I feel about it.

Now, what methods work best in teaching basic skills to high school students? First, you must teach them to read because until they can do that you are wasting your time. But don't fall into the easy trap of saying that we all ought to be teachers of reading because people who are teaching strictly on the basis of what is in the curriculum are not interested in teaching much beyond their own content area. Do you teach the technical language of your field if you teach chemistry or physics or history or math? Do you assume--wrongly and to your and your students' peril--that they know and understand the technical terms used in the textbook or by you in your lectures? Do you assume that a student reading

about a building with some historical value because it has a carol will know that the reference is to a bay window seat and not a group of people, holding lighted candles, singing "Silent Night"?

Many people who say we must all be teachers of reading do not know what being a reading teacher means. Someone said recently, "Dr. Spencer, you're saying we ought to teach developmental reading." I replied, "I didn't say that at all, because if you must go back to teaching developmental reading--decoding, word attack skills, syllabication, etc., etc.,--then you are not going to be able to do it because only reading teachers can teach developmental reading and do it well." What I am saying is that you should not assume that every student who exhibits some reading difficulty is having problems with basic reading skill. The student may be able to read orally and silently with little apparent difficulty but does not begin to comprehend the words he is able to pronounce and even spell or define for you.

It may be absolutely necessary for you to teach some level of reading before you can get on with teaching content. If you can't do this, then you'd best find someone in your school or on your campus who can teach reading. But, if they need to be taught reading in the developmental sense, perhaps they should not even be in a four-year campus. Let's face it. We let students come into college programs who have no business being there. I have been on campuses where the results of the Nelson-Denny indicate that the majority of the incoming freshmen are reading at the fifth- and sixth-grade level. There is absolutely no way that I want anyone coming out of that college to be in my school or department attempting to teach anyone anything at all. First of all, they derived only an infinitesimal amount of learning from that college, they take even less into their own classrooms, and they teach even less than they know. In addition, over time they lose whatever bit of skill they had to begin with, and we all know that after the first five years of teaching you begin to go downhill.

Teaching basic skills is not something that happens by chance, and merely giving a lot of assignments does not automatically bring about improvement. You've got to work with the students; it's not a matter of giving homework; it is monitoring everything that gets done. It is a matter of providing activities and making assignments that build on what they know to begin with. You will find yourself doing more testing than ever before, and you will not be pulling a commercial test off the shelves. You will be developing what you need then and there.

One of the best teachers I ever had was the man who was the first Black to earn a doctorate in psychology. His name was Frank Sumner, and he had been a student of G. Stanley Hall at Clark University. Dr. Sumner taught at Howard University where I also had such teachers as Alain Locke, E. Franklin Frazier, and Sterling Brown. Dr. Sumner gave us a test every day so he knew where we were every day. It was not a mystery for either his students or himself about how much they knew and how far they had to go to learn everything he was there to teach them.

Then there are teachers who say you must give a mid-term exam; you must give a final. It is required by the department or the dean or the college; it is expected by the students. Someone asked me not long ago, "Dr. Spencer, how do you deal with it when the dean sends a memo saying that you must have your grades in fifteen minutes after you've given the final examination?" Fifteen minutes is hyperbole, but you get the point. "Well," I said, "I would be sure that I did not give a final exam that required my sitting up half the night reading essays." I went on, "Why would you give an essay exam as a final to begin with?" The proper way to handle such a dean is to give tests all along, keep up with your students' progress weekly or bi-weekly, and, if you do it right, you don't have to ever give a final. But if the dean requires one, you write a test that has two or three questions on it, objective test format would be best, and write the work final in great big letter across the top. You can score it in about ten minutes and have those grades in the dean's office in fifteen minutes as he asked. You can play the game, but you can also do what is in the best interests of your students.

The main reason you are going to do more testing is because the best way to improve what goes on in the classroom is to know what your students are doing every step along the way. It is not a matter of fewer tests if you do it right--it is a matter of more. And you are not going to use the scores on the tests to beat the students over the head. You are going to use the results to improve the next step you plan to take with them. You will say, "All right. I didn't do such a good job of teaching this concept. I'd better go back and find some more examples and provide more explanations of the application of the concept." You do this; you spend additional class time on it, and when you're through, you test again, asking the same kinds of questions in a different context but dealing with the concept in question. And when you do all this, you can be fairly sure that you have helped your students see that there are many different ways of arriving at understanding the concept.

We teach people how to teach by modeling for them how to do it. How many of you have sat through a lecture on how to individualize instruction, and walked out with voluminous notes, still not knowing how because it was not demonstrated? You learn how to do by doing. You learn how to teach by teaching. It is by doing that we learn what works and what doesn't; what will work with this student and not with that one. The same thing is true about test-taking skills. You learn how to be a successful test-taker because you have been taught how to take tests, how to answer different kinds of questions, how to write essays. You learn by doing.

We hear a great deal about teaching basic skills. What does it mean? We are talking about how--the manner in which--we teach reading to youngsters who demonstrate this or that kind of reading difficulty; we teach math to youngsters who demonstrate this or that kind of quantitative skill deficit. We teach the skill that is lacking so we can get on to the next step, and we cannot move that child until that basic skill has been learned.

One of the funniest things I ever had to do was to try to teach reading to a child who had been in the United States just two weeks from Yugoslavia. You have no idea what I went through. As you may know, there are no cognates between the Slavic language and any language that most of us know how to read or speak. I could teach him arithmetic because he could deal with numbers which are the same in Europe as in America. He could not, however, read word problems, so the result was that daily I sent him and two or three little friends to a corner with a box of flash cards. They taught him how to read the words for what I was trying to tell him. He learned and learned well, in the corner and in the school yard, a great deal more about speaking English than I was ever able to teach him as one child in a class of more than 35 children. This is the best example I can give you today of using individualized instruction and teaching basic skills. I did what I had to do to bring this child more fully into the activities in that classroom. It would have been considerably easier, and destructive of him and me, to shovel him off in a corner alone, ignore him and his needs, and say that I was not getting paid to teach children whose needs required me to prepare special materials and to provide other activities if we were to be successful in our joint enterprise.

If an ACT or SAT candidate has to have math--high school geometry or ninth grade algebra--in order to get through the test, then you have to teach that bit of math that will get him/her over the hump. You don't need to go into calculus or trigonometry if the need is to understand mixed fractions.

As an aside, you may not know about the research that has revealed that Black females have considerable difficulty with percentages, ratios and fractions. If they do not know these very elementary concepts in arithmetic, they most certainly are unable to understand and use more complex learning in mathematics. This is suspected, by the way, as one of the reasons we do not find many Black women teaching math and teaching science, because it was difficult for them to get past elementary school arithmetic. Our task should be clear in this regard, so I won't dwell on this.

I am appalled when I see the low level math skills required to do well on the NTE, and know that many Black prospective teachers who are women do not have the necessary skills. One semester of concentration on basic math skills would not only help them pass the NTE, it would help them acquire a sense of the quantitative that could not fail to help them in the classroom.

I recall a woman who had a master's degree from Kent State University in elementary education who taught in a classroom next door to mine, and whose experience predated mine by several years. One day, at the end of the fall semester, we were all in our rooms at lunchtime, doing report cards and posting reading and arithmetic scores on promotion cards so they could be turned in to the office. She rapped on my door and asked if I would give her some help. It turned out that she did not know how to

find what percent one number is of another number. We had a new principal that year, and she scrutinized everything with a magnifying glass. Not only did the principal look over the promotion cards, she wanted to see the test papers as well. My friend apparently knew she could not get away with whatever she had been doing before. I did not know what she had been doing, but I suspected that she'd been guessing at the percentages she was posting.

Her problem grew out of the fact that the second grade arithmetic test had 32 problems on it. It is difficult to look at 32 and arrive at a percentage if you have no sense of numbers. Thirty-two is not a decimal equivalent of 100. It's not 25, or 50, or 75. Confronted with a score of 27, my friend did not know that to find what percent 27 was of 32, you had to divide 27 by 32. So, I went to the board and drew the algorithm and showed her what to do. I thought to myself, "How can she teach even primary arithmetic, if she doesn't know this simple process?" I know for a fact that there is one Black woman who had either not ever been taught or had never learned and understood a very elementary arithmetic concept. We have to go back to the point at which the confusion and befuddlement began and teach them what they need to know about numbers even if they never teach arithmetic.

You may properly ask about now, "What does any of this have to do with the manner in which and the content of what I teach?" It has to do with the way you think about teaching, about being a teacher to begin with. To put this in context, I must make reference to Charles Silberman, who noted in his book, Crisis in the Classroom, that individuals decide early in their educational experience to become teachers. They sit in classrooms and watch their teachers do what teachers do, and begin to take on the same sort of coloration, and attitude and approach to dealing with people. The result is that by the time they get into and out of a teacher education program, they have fairly well taken on the mental and physical raiment of a classroom teacher. They dress in a certain way; speak in a certain way; they may even become a bit prissy. Some of you may remember that not too many years ago, no female teacher would have appeared in a classroom in a pair of pants, or shown up looking in any way different from the legendary Miss Dove. There are still teachers who have this attitude and coloration even as their outer appearance has changed and seems more relevant to today's style demands--hair, clothing, autos, ideas, etc.

It is imperative that we change this perception of who and what a teacher is and ought to be, and begin looking at what that individual is called upon to do. The desire of most teachers is to be good teachers, to help young people acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be productive, effective, and reasonably satisfied adults. I think you can be a good teacher if you are committed to this belief, and you can be an even better teacher if you are a divergent thinker, a questioning person, a seeker of truth. You have to permit students to exercise this kind of intellectual freedom, but you can only do it if you know what it is in the first place. One learns this kind of behavior by being permitted to

practice this kind of behavior. You, as the teacher, cannot operate on the basis of compartmentalized ways of thinking that would prevent your understanding or acceptance of someone who does not think in the same way. You must be able to help the learner see that his/her way of thinking is as good as yours if it gets the desired result.

I was fortunate to have had those kinds of teachers when I was a little girl. I was fortunate to have had those kinds of teachers as a high school student, and I was most fortunate to have had those kinds of teachers in undergraduate and graduate schools. As I thought in those "off the wall" or "kooky" ways, as my friends described it, no one said, "You can't say that." I was encouraged to think for myself, so while you may not agree with what I think, you do know that I have confidence in my ability to take a position, to defend it with assurance, and to make no apologies for what others may call eccentricity of thought.

This kind of behavior in thought and deed does get across to the students you work with, and it is important that they feel this about you as a teacher. They know, then, that if they take on all of these kinds of things that an education is supposed to give you, then the first and most crucial is to learn to think for oneself. When we talk in this manner and about this idea, we are talking about something called critical thinking. And this, I think, is the overriding principle that I want to address next with respect to the way you do things in your classroom.

Critical thinking is more than this year's buzz word. I am pleased to see, and very, very encouraged about the trend, faint though it is, in many parts of the country that appears to be moving us in the direction of teaching critical thinking skills to our students. The cognitive theorists are finally being heard, and we are seeing the genesis of a movement that is forcing people to look at the manner in which they teach people <u>how</u> to think.

I heard a story on the radio the other day that is appropriate to make my point. I doubt that this happened for real, but it makes a good story, nevertheless. Jim Lowe, a New York disc jockey, was describing small town life and how the foibles and idiosyncrasies of human beings are accepted without question and with respect and affection, even if you were a heavy drinker, as was his uncle who lived in the small Missouri town where Jim Lowe was born. Everyone in town knew the uncle, and as he wandered the streets in his intoxicated condition, people would stop and chat with him. However, he preferred to talk to himself. It seems that one day he was walking through the heart of town on Main Street, carrying on what sounded like an intelligent and lively conversation with himself, and a passerby stopped him and asked, "Uncle George, how do you feel?" He replied, "I feel fine." The passerby asked, "What are you talking about?" Uncle George answered, "I don't know. I'm not listening."

The point is that I think this time around, people are beginning to realize that in order to learn to think, you not only have to think,

you've got to listen to yourself as you do it. You've got to hear it in your head in order to give it contextuality. Thinking skills underlie everything that you are going to be doing as far as raising testing consciousness on this campus is concerned, or in your public school system as we set about evaluating the extent to which students have learned what we hoped to teach them. Once you turn students on to thinking there is no turning back. You will be in the worst kind of trouble you have ever been in in your life because you will have to teach better than you have ever taught before and work harder than you have ever worked before just to stay even with them. Your students will be turned on to actually doing and participating in this whole matter of learning how to think!

Let me tell you about some of the places where this kind of teaching is being done. Up in Bloomfield, New Jersey, for example, there is a program in the community college. In Newark, New Jersey, there is a program called THISTLE being implemented in conjunction with Montclair State College in an effort to help Newark teachers learn how to teach critical thinking. I am happy to tell you they are beginning to see some very positive results in the Newark schools which are confronted with serious educational problems. Edmondson High School in Baltimore has a Black female principal--Susan Jones--who has turned her faculty on to teaching thinking skills, using materials and strategies on teaching analytical and mathematical skills developed by Arthur Whimbey and Jack Lochhead. For two years Edmondson's teachers have been involved in this program, and Mrs. Jones told me last summer that they had more students taking PSAT and SAT and being admitted to more colleges than they'd ever had before. There are more schools moving into such programs, and we should recognize and commend them for their efforts. It is hard work to implement and sustain such a program. But, it is worth all the pain and effort because the students walk out feeling--no, knowing--that they can survive. If you are interested in survival techniques and strategies, you know you must teach people to think for themselves because you won't be there to hand-hold them. They must be able to make decisions about what to do, which way to go, how to get from here to there, and they've got to realize that once they make the decision, that is it. We can make choices; we cannot determine the consequences of those choices. They either have enough information on which to make a decision or they don't, but the decision must be made anyway.

Of what would a thinking skills program consist? The critical components would be the basic skills of reading comprehension, analytical writing, and mathematical problem solving combined with effective classroom instruction to bring about successful student performance. Any move in the direction of implementing a program of this type inevitably leads to the anticipation that improving thinking skills will be reflected in improved performance on traditional standardized tests of achievement and in the basic skills, and increased involvement in classroom activities.

I assure you this is not wishful thinking if we presume that the development of skills in language and cognitive comprehension in the

creative and logical and critical thinking that we want students to be able to engage in will improve their performance. How do we bring this about? How do we develop these strategies for quality that we must build into the things we do with our students, while adhering to the underlying principles basic to good curriculum development?

As I begin to integrate the critical thinking material in the instructional workshops that I do, I am beginning to get the feeling that the participants are ready for learning how to develop these strategies and use different methods and materials, because what they have been exposed to in the past is not producing the results they desire or need. Additionally, more teachers are coming to believe that you can teach people a great deal more than was thought possible if you do not lock yourself and them into the knowledge/comprehension level as the most they are ever able to achieve. The learner must move beyond simple recall to the application to new situations of what has been learned, to the analysis of it in terms to whether this fits the problem presented. They end up developing the ability to think for themselves as they learn to create or present something in a new or personal way, i.e., writing an essay. They begin to put learning in the context of acquisition of knowledge and of the skills needed to demonstrate that knowledge in meaningful situations on demand.

You, of course, know that what I have just described for you is the hierarchy of cognitive skills that Bloom, Krathwohl, et al., developed back in 1956, called the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. This, and other such skills hierarchies are presented to the reader or listener in a linear fashion, but what is actually being described is a circular process, beginning always at the knowledge level, proceeding through comprehension to application to analysis to synthesis to evaluation, and then to knowledge again but now in a spiral, resting on the new knowledge base now possessed by the learner. It is an ever broadening spiral because the learner has more basic knowledge upon which to build as he/she moves through the curriculum. That is until you get to the doctoral degree, and it's less and less, and a whole lot less and finally there's almost nothing left.

Now it comes as a never-ending surprise to teachers that students do not know automatically how to think. You blink your eyes--that's automatic. You swallow--that's an automatic action. Thinking is not automatic action. People have to be taught to think. They have to be taught to evaluate the input so they can make some decision on what the next thing--thought, idea, move--ought to be.

Careful and effective planning for teaching thinking has not received the attention or emphasis as an educational element that it demands, that it requires, that it must have if we are to halt the downward trend in learning skills acquisition that we see every day in our children and youth. We have leaned so far in the other direction that many students

hesitate to trust their own eyes, rely on their own intuition, and utilize their own ability to reason when they find something incorrect in a textbook. This is one of the reasons that when some student takes us on about a faulty item in the SAT, that student gets reams of media publicity because it is news when we find a youngster who can think for himself. When this happens with the SAT, it is embarrassing to ETS, as you might expect. But here is what the media cannot tell you, and it is very significant in this discussion about thinking. There are more faulty items in the GRE than one will ever find on a College Board test, but seldom does a candidate write to tell us about one. I believe that it is because the older candidate has come to believe what the standardized test booklet contains, so does not question what is incorrect in the same way or as quickly as will a high school student. In this latter group are youngsters who will let us know quickly when we have goofed. They will play the game that Banesh Hoffman described in The Tyranny of Testing. Sophisticated test-takers will select the answer they know you want, and then jump on you with both feet as, with relish, they tell you what's wrong with the question, the options, and the keyed answer.

Now this is critical thinking. This is thinking for yourself. One cognitive theorist describes the situation like this: We have told students not to count on their fingers, not to move their lips when they read, to try to read faster, and to be imaginative and creative. But we have not made it clear to them that the core element of academic success is systematic accuracy. We are either ignorant or disdainful of the research on intelligence and scholastic achievement that suggests that the educational system would magnify its impact on the development of reading, math and analytical skills if every teacher from preschool through college would stress the importance of accuracy in thinking.

If we let students get away with sloppy thinking, then these are the kinds of things we permit to happen in our classrooms. Do you, for example, when students give you an answer that borders on factual accuracy, but just misses the point, say "Give me a reason." "Where did you get that information?" "Can you support that statement?" Or do we just accept the answer and let it go at at that moment, believing that we are going to try to clean it up ourselves in a later lecture or class session. The problem with this is that in the meantime some of the students who sat there and heard that piece of misinformation that you let pass might not be there when your cleanup day comes.

You must think in terms of what message you are sending in that classroom. Will your students hear themselves think out loud so that as they proceed with what you are trying to help them learn, they are evaluating it every step along the way? I mention this because there are myths in education that we allow young people to believe. "Don't move your lips when you read" comes first to mind. How many times have you, while reading something, been momentarily distracted and find that the distraction has caused you to lose your thought? You may lose your place on the page so you go back and read it again and you are still lost. What do you do? You start reading out loud, moving your lips. Why? So you can hear what

your eyes are seeing. We tell students, "Don't point at the words." Why not? The finger serves as a marker that helps you find where you are reading. We say, "Don't read words, read in thought groups." How in the world are you going to read in thought groups until you read each word and put it together with the next word? You will have to read an entire sentence, word by word, to begin comprehending what thought is being conveyed. How are you going to read in phrases until you read each word in order to know which words go with which words to make up a phrase? We tell students to read only the important words. How are you going to know what's important until you read all of it? Read the big words. What about those little words--those connectives called conjunctions? You read "So and so, and thus and so, BUT...." If you read only the big words or so-called important words, you will skip over that BUT, and miss the idea being presented. These silly caveats, by the way, came about because some teachers did not understand the use of the tachistoscope, a device used in the remediation of reading disabilities that allows a brief exposure to visual stimuli. Teachers' failure to understand the research caused the findings to be misapplied and resulted in the myths that get in the way of effective instruction.

Don't move your lips when you read. One of the things you do when you read, believe it or not, is move your lips. It's called subvocalization. All of us do it. You could not read if you did not move your lips. Let me tell you how you can prove this. Lock yourself in a room tomorrow morning at nine o'clock and stay there until six p.m. Have a stack of books to read. No one will interrupt you in any way--in person or by telephone or whatever. When you come out at six o'clock, you will be so hoarse you will be unable to talk. The reason is that you will have been subvocalizing for nine hours. Those little muscles in your throat--your vocal chords--will have been vibrating just like the strings on a violin because you will have been subvocalizing just about every word you read for nine hours. And we tell our students, "Don't move your lips!"

How are they going to learn? Having them think out loud, listening to themselves think as they engage in class discussion, helps them develop thinking skill. The goal is to move from doing it out loud to internalizing it and being able to do it by themselves. We put all these inane barriers in the way of real learning, which means that we put them in the way of critical thinking, or any kind of thinking--critical or otherwise. Even half-baked thinking is better than none at all.

We need to emphasize and put a good deal of stress on the mental process of learning to do, a process which is the same whether students are reading a book, writing an essay, or conducting an experiment in the chemistry laboratory. The stress is on what we call systematic analysis and logical examination of problems. Let me put it another way. Whatever the subject, there is always a heavy emphasis on, a consideration or analysis of, only a small part of the whole topic. Take a subject-matter textbook, for example. You start on page one and go through to page 443. Not everything in the text is worth reading. Think about how it came

into being in the first place. Someone received a contract to write a 443-page book. After the first 150 pages, just about all that could and should be said on the topic had been said, and the rest is filler. Why do you not sometimes start on Chapter 5--that may be where the meat is--or do you always begin on page one? Do you go through the text, pull out what is important, make an abstract of it, and help your students find the truly important facts, and go on to the next topic? Do you provide them with a great deal of supplemental material to flesh out what the textbook contains or is it a matter of just plodding through page after page after page to page 443? After unremitting exposure to this kind of teaching, they get so bored that nothing seems important to them, including what really ought to be pulled out of the verbiage for a closer look.

Now it should be obvious to observers of the education scene that there has been a shift in our ideas about thinking, a shift in our thinking about effective teaching strategies and techniques, moving in the direction of active student involvement in learning with a strong problem solving orientation and away from passive lecture-oriented classes. When this kind of orientation pervades the classroom and when the instructional process has as its goal improving basic skills and reasoning ability, then the major emphasis is on the preparation of classroom teachers who can strengthen the creative, logical, critical thinking skills of their students.

Helping students develop the consciousness, the willingness, and the ability to engage in intellectually active, constructive and reflective encounters with ideas about content is the goal of instruction. It's called "thinking." One of the most difficult tasks we face as teacher educators is to teach our students how to think so they can go forth and teach thinking. It will be hard because we have to learn how to do it ourselves before we can teach it to others. The degree to which we will be successful is the degree to which we come to know that any project, any program or process that has as its goal the improvement of teaching thinking skills has to be based on the belief that the person who is going to do it knows that thinking skills are requisite components of both the basic skills of reading comprehension, of analytical writing of mathematical problem solving and of successful classroom performance. We cannot have one without the other, and when we get it all together, we've got the best teaching/learning system we could hope for.

In order to accomplish this, the content area teacher must emphasize planning across the disciplines, must know and understand that all subject matter has both verbal and quantitative elements, and that no discipline can be ignored when we teach higher order thinking skills. Yes, teach science and math, but teach music and physical education and sociology and geography as well.

You say it will cost more and take longer to do it this way. I do not agree. You are spending money and time now and getting only meagre results. You must decide to spend the money and effort on something that

is going to pay off. The cost in money, time, and effort will be the same. I am reminded of the testimony that was given at the Supreme Court at the time the attorneys were arguing Lau v. Nichols, the case that resulted in federal funding for bilingual-bicultural education in this country. There were about 1800 Chinese children enrolled in the San Francisco Unified School District who were not being provided with instruction in their native language. In essence, they were assigned to custodial care in their classrooms. The suit filed on their behalf wound its way through the California legal system and ultimately found its way to Washington, D.C. One of the justices asked the defendants' attorney how much it would cost to train teachers to teach these Chinese children, and he said about $4 million dollars a year. The next question was, how much are you paying for people to sit in the classrooms with these 1800 Chinese children, and the answer was about $4 million dollars a year. You know what the conclusion was. If you are spending the money, and you are not getting what you need, then you'd better be spending it for what you ought to have. It doesn't cost any more because you are going to spend it anyway. The difference is that you will be focusing on the right things, not just anything.

To conclude, if we are to implement our thinking skills approach in education, three things must happen. First, we must meet both personnel and financial resource needs. Second, these resources must be committed to an integrated curriculum. Third, there must be in place staff development programs that provide teachers with guided instruction by teacher educators who are firm believers in the use of curriculum resources in the planning process, in instruction in the matter of higher order thinking skills, and in guidance of a skillful orchestration of a wide range of resources, including teaching materials, strategies, activities, and evaluation techniques. When all of this is brought to bear, things can only get better.

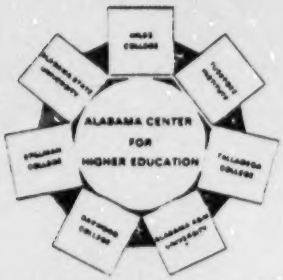
When thinking skills improve, test-taking skills will improve. We are called upon to teach test-taking skills to students who don't know how to think. If they know how to think, you don't have to be concerned about their skill at test-taking. But one of these days, if we do it right, students will not have to worry about standardized tests because when people think for themselves, there is no need to provide a multiple-choice format from which one selects a best or preferred answer as determined by the test developer. The result might be the end of standardized tests as we know them.

This leads me to comment on another matter--the call for elimination of standardized tests because minority candidates do not do as well. Getting rid of tests will not solve the problem. You will have gained nothing as far as I can see if you go in this direction. If we do not teach people to think, we have lost, we have lost our young people, and we will have lost our reason for being, namely the fact that you are a teacher whose goal in life is to help those you teach to be independent of you. If you don't begin to do the kinds of things I have talked about

today, you deserve the kind of garbage and watered-down content that many standardized tests throw at you. These tests serve an immediate purpose because we are not required to teach genuine thinking skills. A test-taker who is sophisticated in the ways of standardized test format is successful because of the high reliance on memory. When you teach this test-taking skill you are teaching the student to recognize a statement or fact among the others presented and from which the answer is to be selected. But when you give an essay examination, you are calling for a very different mental activity. You are asking them to think for themselves. They must reach down and pull out what they know, ascertain how well they know and understand it, and come up with a product--the essay--that satisfies the demands of the task itself. There is, of course, no one correct answer to a good essay examination question. What you get, then, is a demonstration of what happens when people learn to think for themselves.

I have been told that instruction in discussion, questioning and inquiry techniques, and in developing and using strategies for improving reading composition, expository writing, and problem solving in mathematics would be welcomed by teachers at every level of education. I think it is time we began to deliver what they need.

Paper presented at the
Conference on "The Testing Issue"
by
Thelma L. Spencer, Ed.D.
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, NJ 08541



Conference On "The Testing Issue"
April 12-13, 1984

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NAME OF INSTITUTION Alabama A & M

CONTACT PERSON (ONE WHO CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IF NEEDED)
Mrs. Joyce J. Shipman, Director/Certification Specialist

DESCRIPTION OF MODEL The Teacher Service Center, through the School of Education, offers a course, EDU 101 Laboratory Approach to Concept Development, designed to provide students of Alabama A & M with special training in the mechanics of test-taking skills that will result in improved performance on various standardized examinations. The course is open to any student desiring to improve his test-taking skills. All books, materials and computer-assisted instruction are provided through the center. Education majors who have not made 16 on the ACT are required to take the course. Specifically, the course is designed to help students: (1) Become familiar with various types of examinations. (2) Improve general test-taking skills. (3) Increase knowledge of subject matter in various fields: English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies. (4) Improve skills in analyzing and answering questions

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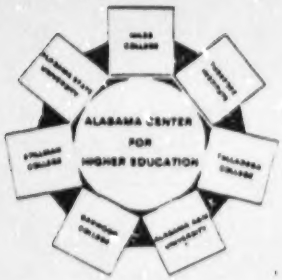
involving reasoning, judgement, comparison and evaluation. (5) Improve speed and skill in reading. The Teacher Service Center functions to: (1) Provide special interdisciplinary assistance to students in an effort to help them improve their performance on the ACT as required by State mandate. (2) Organize and control a system for keeping records on all teacher education majors. This includes applications as well as retention and completion data. (3) Recruit teacher education majors, specifically those with ACT scores of 16 or above, and those with potential to earn the mandated score. (4) Provide advisors with pertinent information concerning students assigned to them. (5) Provide information when necessary to students and teachers to keep them abreast of program changes and requirements at the undergraduate level. (6) Organize computer-assisted instructional packets to be used by students preparing to take the ACT and/or State Certification tests. (7) Serve as a clearing house for Teacher Education.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO FACULTY: The Teacher Service Center strives to assist the faculty by: (1) Providing assistance in the preparation of pre-service teachers. (2) Providing the School of Education with information regarding the status of education majors. (3) Offering assistance in the selection, development and production of instructional materials. (4) Conducting professional workshops. (5) Acquiring current information regarding techniques in instruction. (6) Supplementing materials and equipments made available through the Learning Resources Center.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS: (1) Make application for admission to Teacher Education. (2) Receive assistance in preparing for teacher-made and standardized tests, specifically ACT, NTE, and Certification Exams. (3) Seek assistance in the preparation fo class projects. (4) Check out instructional materials (books, films, records, kits, etc.). (5) Acquire assistance in the production of instructional materials.



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NAME OF INSTITUTION Alabama State University, Montgomery, Alabama 36195

CONTACT PERSON (ONE WHO CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IF NEEDED)
Dr. Beatrice B. Morse, Director CIIL, 504 Levi Watkins Learning Center (205) 293-4492

DESCRIPTION OF MODEL The Center for Improvement of Instruction and Learning (CIIL), is designed to serve as a change unit, ultimately concerned with effecting improvements in student achievement and test scores by providing technical assistance. It examines teaching methods, evaluates course syllabi in relationship to regional and national criteria and collects and analyzes data on the performance of students on standardized tests so as to systematize the improvement of instruction and learning.

Workshops, seminars and mini-courses are conducted for both faculty and students. Some training sessions are regularly scheduled while others are held by request.

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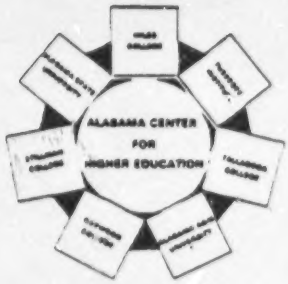
"Faculty Training Sessions"	"Students Training Sessions"
Alternative Teaching Strategies	Test-Taking skills
Research and Proposal Writing	Preparing for the ACT, NTE, GRE, GMAT, MCAT
Advisement	Reducing Test Anxiety
Test Construction and Item Writing	Note-taking skills
Syllabus Improvement	Thinking and Problem Solving Skills



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NAME OF INSTITUTION Oakwood College

CONTACT PERSON (ONE WHO CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IF NEEDED)
Ms. Jeanette Dulan

DESCRIPTION OF MODEL A skills development program is incorporated into ED 152, "Orientation to Teaching." (See attached flow chart.) Students are required to master competencies in five (5) areas prior to exit. The areas are Math, Oral, Written, Reading, and others. There are three levels of competence in each area. The third level is minimal for exit whereas levels two and one determine quality letter grades (i.e. A's & B's).

Additionally, a plan for familiarizing students with the competencies for the Alabama Initial Certification Tests has been developed. (See attached plan.)

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OAKWOOD COLLEGE

Alabama Teacher Certification Test Project

The recent Alabama certification amendment requires anyone seeking state certification to pass a comprehensive exam that measures content knowledge of the specific areas for which the applicant is requesting certification.

Teacher education faculty have each received a package of study objectives on which the exam is based.

It is important that our students be prepared for this exam. How they score directly affects their options in entering the field of education as well as the credibility of our teacher education program here at Oakwood College.

Students, teachers, advisors, must share the responsibility of Oakwood graduates' successful performance on this exam. A suggested plan for familiarizing students with these objectives has been outlined below:

Students

1. Purchase a notebook for organizing objectives that are to be mastered. The objectives should be received during orientation by all freshmen education majors and minors. Transfer students should receive the objectives from their advisors. The student should plan to begin documenting and mastering objectives in the freshman year and continue through the senior year (graduation).

2. Upon entering a course, evaluate the course syllabus as to what objectives are built in that are related to the Alabama Certification Test objectives.

3. The student may select an Independent Study project topic that relates to the objectives or areas of the objects s/he needs to strengthen.

4. Be aware that all objectives in a given area will not be covered in one course. Be prepared to seek information from several courses, and be prepared to supplement information independently in meeting the objectives via various sources.

Advisors

1. Distribute appropriate objectives to each transfer student that will not be entering the orientation course at Oakwood.
2. Follow up initial distribution of objectives with subsequent contacts, asking the student how s/he is progressing in the objectives notebook.
3. Suggest ways the student can familiarize him/herself with the objectives and organize the notebook for maximum utilization.
4. Remind all students at registration of the importance of mastering objectives in his/her field.

Orientation Teacher

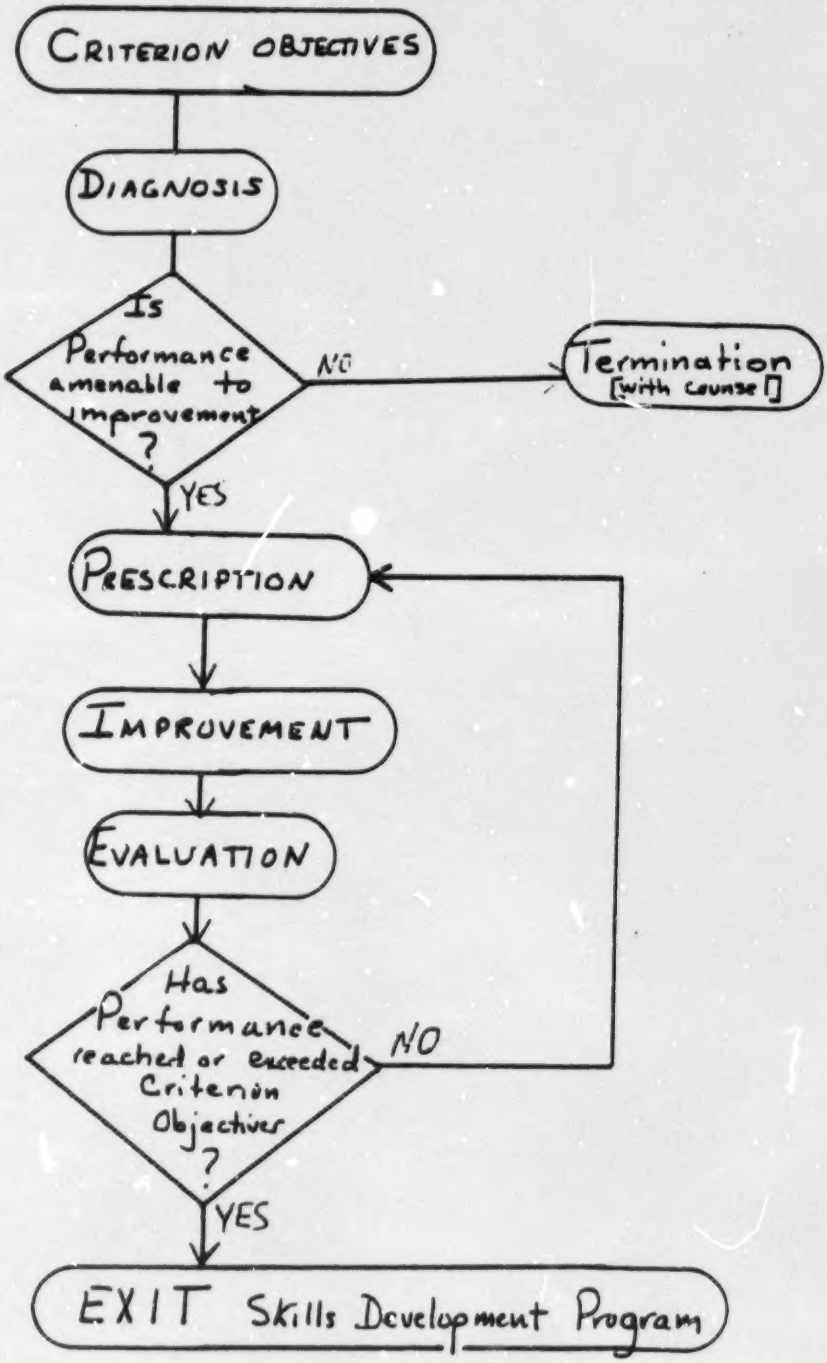
1. Distribute appropriate objectives to each student.
2. Suggest ways in which the student should familiarize him/herself with the objectives.
3. Suggest ways to organize and utilize the required "objectives" notebook.

Teacher

1. In preparing syllabi for courses, identify the objectives in the Alabama Teacher Certification Test (ATCT) that you will cover.
2. Assist students in identifying the objectives covered in your course that relate to the ATCT.

ORIENTATION TO TEACHING

Skills Development Model



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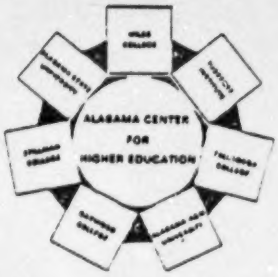

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NAME OF INSTITUTION Stanley H. Kaplan Educational Center

CONTACT PERSON (ONE WHO CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IF NEEDED)

Miss Eleanor G. Salmon and Miss Louise H. Salmon, Administrators

DESCRIPTION OF MODEL The Stanley H. Kaplan Educational Center specializes in preparing the test-taker for 31 various standardized tests. The ACT and SAT exams taken by high school juniors and seniors are two such tests. The courses are geared toward students who need:

1. sharpened math and verbal skills - a refresher of the math and verbal knowledge acquired throughout high school.
2. a thorough understanding of test-taking techniques, the psychology and underlying meaning behind tricky test questions, and, in general, how the test-makers think.
3. imoroved analytical and reasoning skills so necessary for success on the ACT and SAT.

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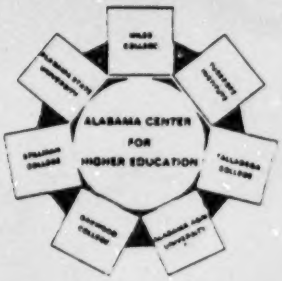
The ACT and SAT courses each have a three-pronged approach:

1. live classes(SAT-11; ACT-10)
2. Supplementary Test and Tape Program which provides hundreds of hours of practice at test-taking plus detailed explanation of math/verbal principles. The tapes may be listened to at our Centers which are open 70-80 hours per week seven days per week. We believe taking a test is like playing the piano or tennis. In order to excel one must practice; therefore, we emphasize utilizing our facilities as much as possible.
3. Home-study materials whidh contain hundreds of self-correcting exercises and mini-tests.

Our basic philosophy:

1. Only an improved student receives an improved score.
2. We stress concepts rather than rote memorization.
3. It is our belief that only long-term preparation is effective. Cramming is <u>not</u> our technique.

Stanley H. Kaplan Educational Center
2130 Highland Avenue
Birmingham, Alabama 35205
(205)939-0183



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NAME OF INSTITUTION Stillman College

CONTACT PERSON (CNE WHO CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IF NEEDED)
Dr. Carl Marbury, Vice-President for Academic Affairs

DESCRIPTION OF MODEL Project T.E.A.C.H./P.R.I.D.E. was offered to Stillman College faculty during the summer of 1983 for 22 persons. During 1984 it is hoped that the entire faculty will be involved. The descriptions are listed below:

PROJECT T.E.A.C.H. Teacher Effectiveness and Classroom Handling - 3 cr.

Examines the sophisticated fundamentals of the non-curricular aspects of teaching; emphasizes practical and positive techniques to counteract the frequently negative realities of the real world classroom. Covers the verbal skills, momentum and non-confrontation strategies, group dynamics and decision-making techniques, to enable the teacher to spend more time teaching and less time disciplining.

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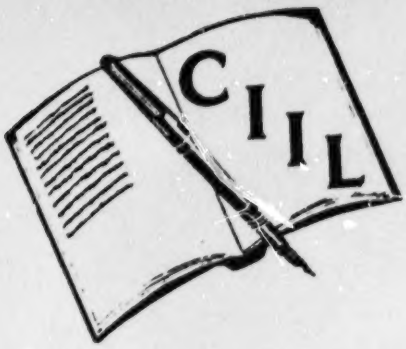
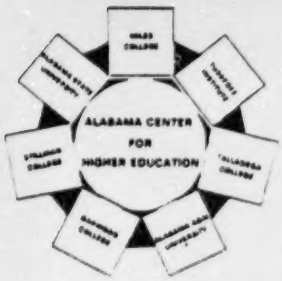
P.R.I.D.E. Professional Refinements in Developing Effectiveness - 3 cr.

Helps teachers to: develop awareness of and sensitivity to nonverbal communciation by both students and teacher; employ questioning techniques that enrich the quality of learning and reduce control problems through a system of rewards and penalties; analyze and deal with critical incidents by assessing possible courses of action; and examine teaching practices. P.R.I.D.E. has a multimedia approach, with emphasis on the visual. The goal is to increase precision in teaching skills, create smoothly operating classrooms and reduce stress.





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NAME OF INSTITUTION Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee Institute, AL 36088

CONTACT PERSON (ONE WHO CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IF NEEDED)
Mrs. Ethel P. Cyrus, Director, TESD-Huntington Hall-Rm. 107 (205) 727-8274

DESCRIPTION OF MODEL In response to the special needs of Tuskegee Institute's students, the Test and Examination Skills Development (TESD) Program was developed and initiated in the Fall of 1979 with a Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education. TESD is now a component of the Reading and Study Skills Development Center. The purpose of the Program is to provide Tuskegee's students with special training in test-taking skills. To meet the challenge of helping students improve their performance on tests early in in their college careers, TESD was merged with Reading 102 in the Reading Center. All incoming and transfer students who have been placed in Reading 102 are exposed to basic skills that will help them to improve their performance on teacher-made tests as well as to develop standardized tests techniques through the following objectives: 1. To improve through sixteen-week training sessions, test-taking skills of students in Vocabu-

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lary, Reading Comprehension, Critical Listening Comprehension and Analytical Thinking to the point that a ten percent gain on scores for each student is evidenced on a pre-post criterion-referenced test. 2. To improve through five special eight-week training sessions each year of the grant period, the test-taking skills of students in Reading Comprehension, English Usage, Analytical Thinking and Special Vocabulary, to the point that a ten percent gain in scores is evidenced on a pre-post criterion-referenced test. 3. To administer pre-post simulated standardized test activities to all program students. The simulated post-standardized scores will show a ten percent gain in the raw scores of each student.

The program is open to all students desiring to improve their test-taking skills. Participation in these sessions is voluntary and no fees are required. All books and practice materials are provided by the program. There are numerous examination preparation study books, and other materials available for use by interested participants.

TESD activities are merged with the regular Reading 102 classes. Practice materials and specimen of various standardized tests are also provided for simulated test-taking activities and laboratory experiences.

Instruction in the TESD sessions is jointly provided by faculty in the: Reading & Study Skills Center, School of Education, Department of English, School of Nursing, and Department of Radiologic Technology.